

1-1-2010

## Parental Socio-Economic Status, Family Type and School Dropout in the Ewutu Educational Circuit Winneba, Ghana – Implication for Counseling

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### Recommended Citation

Edet, Pauline and Ekegre, Ekeng (2010) "Parental Socio-Economic Status, Family Type and School Dropout in the Ewutu Educational Circuit Winneba, Ghana – Implication for Counseling," *Academic Leadership: The Online Journal*: Vol. 8 : Iss. 4 , Article 46.  
Available at: <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol8/iss4/46>

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# Academic Leadership Journal

## INTRODUCTION

The researcher was motivated to carry out this research study following her keen interest to investigate influence of Parental Socio Economic Status family type on school dropout in the Ewutu Educational Circuit in Winneba township having observed that a great number of primary school pupils are often found roaming the streets in school uniforms during school hours. She also observed that a sizable number of school going age children are found hawking around, with babies tied behind their backs. The researcher became interested in investigating if Parental Socio Economic Status and the type of families these pupils come from do significantly influence school dropout. This situation has become a general phenomenon and is responsible for school dropout and is a general educational problem in the study area. Although there has been a number of laudable school programmes intended to keep pupils in schools, these have not yet yielded their intended or desired objectives

Education is an important tool for the development of an individual, the society and the Nation at large. For this reason the Nations are much concerned over the provision of education to her citizens in all countries all over the world. Stakeholders in Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana (in which this study is carried out) in particular are convinced that development depends to a large extent on education because they believe that solutions to social economic, intellectual and their technological problems could be unraveled and solved through the process of educating their citizens.

To achieve this Ghana has since from the 1950<sup>s</sup> (from records) made significant strides in her educational system. The effort of the past governments is seriously complimented with those of the present governments. Such laudable efforts include the education Act of 1951 which aimed at mobilizing all the available resources to open up as many school as possible. The 1961 Education Act which aimed at providing free-fee and compulsory Education for all school going age children of 6year primary and 4year middle school. There was also the Dzodoo Committee Report, the Education Reform of 1987, which promise increased access to Education at the basic level, also recommending that parents should be more involved in Education and to add to this, was the Free-Compulsory Universal Basic Education, which promised to provide quality Education in teaching and learning. The Ghana Trust Fund aimed at providing and financing Education to supplement the efforts of the government and the parents for pupils schooling. Also the Capitation Grant of 2005/2006 which was established to cushion the burden of parents in meeting the cost of sending their children to school and to encourage parents especially in deprived areas to send their children to school. These efforts aimed at supporting encouraging the parents to send their children to school. Despite all these initiatives intended to expand access and ensure completion of basic Education, most children fail to continue and complete their basic Education programme.

Besides, failure of the children to have interest in school, some parents practically engage their children during school hours to contribute to their survival needs as some of these parents pretend to see no benefit in allowing their children to go to school. Family type is therefore perceived to have influence in

the pupils school drop out, this is so because the type of family will determine the extend to which the pupil will complete their schools. It is therefore assumed that some parents seem not to be interested in their children's school going business. This study is also interested to find out if the socio economic status of the parents can contribute as a factor in influencing school drop out among pupils in the study area.

## **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

The problem of this study is getting pupils into school and keeping them in school to complete their programme of study. As a result of parental negative influence and type of family background, some of these parents engage their children in taking very active part in the survival needs of the family as some children are found loitering at the beach helping in the fishing activities while some are found running errands for money. Since the pupils leave school to hawk around, help in the fishing activities and run errands for money, they stand out of the school during school hours. Among several other activities they engage in during school in activities that keep them out of school during school hours, as observed, is the desire to help in the family financially. This study seeks to investigate if parental socio-economic status and family type are factors of school drop out among pupils in the Winneba Township.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is:

To investigate if the socio-economic status of the parents and family type are significant factors in pupils dropping out of school.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

To what extent does Parental Socio-Economic Status, and Family Type influence School drop out among pupils in Winneba Township?

**RESEARCHER HYPOTHESIS:** There is a significant influence of Parental Socio-Economic Status, and Family Type on pupils dropping out of School.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Review of the related literature for this study was carried out under the following headings

- I. Parental Socio-Economic Status and School Drop – Out.
- II. Family Type and School Drop – Out.

## **PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND SCHOOL DROPOUT**

Household income according to Croft (2002) is an important factor in determining access to education as schooling potentially attracts a range of costs, both upfront and hidden. He further explained that upfront costs include school fees while the more hidden cost include uniforms, travel equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. The household income is seen as a determiner of children and is it linked to a range of factors; when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporally withdraw and when they have to dropout. Some research studies highlight the

link between household income and how it interacts with dropping out from school. **UNICEF** 2005, Bruneforth, 2006 and Cardoso & Verner, 2007, whilst describing exclusions rather than dropout per se, paint poverty as 'the most common primary and contributory reason for students to be out of school.

According to Macionis Janssen and Benoit (2005), formal schooling and especially learning that is not directly linked to work is mostly available only to wealthy people.

They further noted that all low – income countries have one trait in common when it comes to schooling. There is not very much of it. In the poorest nations in Africa only half of all children ever get to school and for the world as a whole, just half of children reach the secondary grade. As a result 15, 39, and 40 percent of Latin American, Asians and Africans are illiterate respectively. Hunter and May (2003) call poverty 'a plausible explanation of school disruption. Dachi and Garrett (2003) asked a series of question to parents and guidance about the financial circumstances surrounding a children school. On enrolment in Tanzania, virtually all households responding said the main barrier to sending children to school was financial and their inability to pay. In a study of gifted dropouts by Renzulli and park (2000), they found out that the students they studied disliked school and felt disconnected from the groups in school. The further noted that in general, these pupils were from lower income families and had parents who were not as likely to monitor their school activities, and the gifted that had stayed in school were from high income families and had parents who were likely to monitor their school activities. Pryor and Ampiah's (2003) research on schooling in a Ghanaian village, found education as being regarded as a 'relative luxury' with many villagers considering education not worthwhile. How people regard schooling and the importance placed on it at times might shape interactions between schooling, household income and dropping out

Poor household tend to have lower demand for schooling that richer household whatever the benefits of schooling, the costs, for them are more difficult to meet than is the case for richer household. Co cough (2000) describes the link between wealth and schooling retention in more detail. He noted that amongst those who had never enrolled; children at school were on average from better – off households than those who dropped out who were in turn from richer background than school-age children who had never enrolled.

Children in rural areas, and children in poorer homes drop out of school earlier, drop out in greater numbers, and fail to make the transaction to junior high schools compared to their peers in richer homes. (<http://WWW.sussex.ac.uk/education//11-4.html>)

## **FAMILY TYPE AND SCHOOL DROPOUT**

Children according to sadker and sadker (1991) spend 87 percent of their time out of school under the influence of parents. As a result the have greater influence on them and the decisions the make. The changing nature of the family affects schooling access. In the olden days teachers sent letters addressed to dear parents confident types of family into six, the nuclear, extended, the single – parent, the blended, cooperative and family without children. Apart from the later all care for children. According to Carlson (1991) the number of single parent families has increased to a total of 9.7 million in America, almost all headed by women. This is likely to be more in Africa and Ghana in particular. O'Neil (1991) also added that more than half of children born today will spend at least part of their childhood years in a one parent home. Davis (1991) also noted that significant adults in many children's lives are not their parents at all, but grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, or

neighbors. According to Sadker and Sadker one out of every six American families is a stepfamily and about one in three children lives in a step family. He added that these families are created when divorced parents remarry. Step families consist of biological relationships with stepparents, stepsiblings, multiple set of grandparents and what often becomes a confusing array of relatives from old and new marriages; this has made communication and collaboration more difficult than ever and is a likely cause of school drop out. Anderson, Logio & Taylor (2005) speaking on post divorce and single parent stated that, one of the major tasks facing parents in divorce is that of determine children living arrangements, as family members separate into two households. Most decisions occur with little discussion between the parents. This put children at risk of dropping out of school. These authors further concluded that, divorcing parents find it difficult to take the time and explain trouble required to negotiate with children over task assignments and joint plans. Under these conditions of diminishing parenting, children tend to become bored, moody and restless and feel misunderstood; these reactions lead to increase in behaviors that irritate their parent and mutually cohesive cycles ensure. Amato & Booth (1996), however, noted that, majority of children seem to cope with and adapt well to the change in their parents marital status even though they may well have to cope with multiple adverse circumstances. According to Herbert (1996), the family deficit theory views the nuclear or two parent families as the ideal family structure and their parenting as not bad for children. The theory sees the absence of the other parent as a deficit to the family since his services would be missed, thus, presents a lot of challenges to the children and the other parent. Anderson et al (2005) has stated that, research attention on step-parenting has increased dramatically in the past as divorce and remarriage rate have escalated and remain high. He further explained that, remarriage of a divorced parent and creations of a step family entail numerous disruptions and tradition. These may include children dropping out from school.

Rice (2002) also noted that, complex histories and multiple relationships make adjustment difficult in a step family. Conger & Chao (1996) also added that, children in divorced families are more likely than children in non-divorced families to have academic problems to show externalized problems (such as acting out and delinquency) and internalized problems (such as anxiety, and depression) to be less socially responsible, to have less competent intimate relationships, to drop out of school, to become sexually active at an early age, to take drugs, to associate with anti-social peers and to have low self – esteem. But it must be remembered that, majority of children in divorced families do not have significant adjustment problems. Children in step-families show more adjustments problems than children in non-divorced families (Hetherington, Bridges & Isabella, 1998) the adjustment problems are similar to these in divorced children academic problems and low self-esteem. Sweeney (2003) noted that, children's depressive symptoms increased in the first years after a step family was formed but the longer they were in the step family, the fewer depressive symptoms they had. Walton (2005) finds the family unit to be a system in which no element can act independently. Hence, the action of one individual demands the reaction of the other in the unit. Therefore, the absence of one element affects the functioning of the other elements. Single parenting implies that, the family does not function properly because of the other parent.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research used a survey research design to investigate the influence of parental socio-economic status and family type on school dropout. The study used dependable and independent variables to account for the variable in the multi-linear regression design which tells how much of the variable in the

dependent variable is accented for the independent variable and how significant the dependable variable is in accenting for the variable used in each case.

## **POPULATION OF STUDY**

The target population for the study included the entire primary school dropout pupils in Winneba Township and their parents /guardians. The study involved an estimated population of (3200) three thousands and two hundreds drop out pupils and parents/guardians.

Source (EMIS 2008)

## **SAMPLING TECHNIQUE**

Both the probability sampling techniques, the purposive sampling techniques were used; the probability sampling involved some form of random selection in choosing the respondents or cases to be included in the study. Every member of the population involved in this form of selection had an equal chance of being selected to form part of the study. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting one district; this is because the district is large enough for the study and have all characteristic necessary for the study.

From this, two circuits out of three circuits were selected using the hat and draw random sampling method, within these two circuits there are twelve primary schools and from the twelve primary schools, eight schools were randomly sampled for the study. Random sampling technique was used due to the large nature of the population in the selected area. All dropout pupils from class two to six were included in each of the schools selected.

In selecting the sample of dropout from within each selected school, the researcher requested for registers and cumulative records of pupils. Where these were not available, the snowball sampling technique was used. Agbeke and Denkyirah (1999) explained that, with snowball, you need to identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristic that you require. The researcher then used this group as informants to identify others who qualify for inclusion and these pupils too, in turn identify others.

The purposeful sampling technique was used to select parents. Colon and Marion (1995) cited by Agbeke and Denkyirah (1999) explained this technique as handpicking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their typicality. By using this, a sample that is satisfactory to the specific needs of the research was built.

## **SAMPLE**

There are three circuits in the Winneba Municipality supervised by officers called circuit supervisors. The circuits are: Winneba West, Winneba East, and Winneba Central. From three educational circuits in the area the researchers will randomly select two circuits. There are a total number of nineteen schools in the three circuits. Two circuits were selected. Four schools from each circuit were randomly selected for the study.

This was done by writing names of circuits on pieces of papers folding them and putting them in a basket and blindly picking any two of them and the same procedure was done for the schools, which

were randomly selected from the four schools to make up eight schools within the circuit. Pupils from all classes 1 – 6 were included in the study.

<b>TABLES F: SHOWING NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</b>		
<b>Winneba Central</b>	Number of pupils	Number of parents
University Practice Primary (north)	25	25
M/A primary A/B	25	25
Ansarudeen Islamic primary	25	25
A.M.E Zion D'	25	25
<b>Winneba East</b>		
Don Bosco's catholic boys	25	25
Don Bosco's catholic girls primary	25	25
Essuekyir Methodist primary	25	25
A.C.M primary	25	25
Total	200	200
<b>SUM TOTAL OF RESPONDENTS</b>		400

The instrument used was the self-report questionnaire (SRQ) to collect data for the study. These were appropriate because the population of pupils and parents under consideration is too large to speak to individuals and it offered the respondents the chance to respond to reasons for which they dropped out or their wards dropped out.

The questionnaire was made up of forty two (42) closed ended items to which respondents were required to choose from. The questionnaire meant for dropout contained twenty eight (28) items in section A and was the pupils' questionnaire and section B was the parents' questionnaire.

The items in section A sought to elicit information from the pupils why they dropped out of school. Parents questionnaire which was section B was made up of fourteen (14) closed ended items (and sought information from parents on school drop out.) the questionnaire was based on a likert scale to determine the direction of the responses in relation to variables of the study and to measure the level of the direction in relation to others.

## **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Data from eight primary schools out of a total of nineteen (19) primary schools in the area was collected. Data collection was based upon dropout from sampled schools and existing data from available documents such as registers and cumulative records. Data was also obtained from parents and school records.

## DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The correlation analysis was used to analyze data as the method lends itself more to the analysis of data from cross-sectional survey designs that investigated the relationship between two or more naturally occurring, non manipulated and measurable variables since quantitative data on these variable can readily be collected in the natural world without setting up an experiment. Correlational data was therefore used to answer research questions as whether a named variable has significant effect on school dropout.

**HYPOTHESIS:** There will be a significant relationship between parental socio-economic status, family type and school dropout in the Winneba township.

The dependent variable: Parental Socio-Economic Status/Family type

Independent variables: School dropout in the Winneba Township

Statistical Test: Person's correlational method.

## DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

**HYPOTHESIS:** There will be a significant relationship between parental socio-economic status, family type, on school drop out in the Winneba Township.

**TABLE I**

**TABLE 1: A CORRELATION MATRIX OF THE FACTORS (N = 200) ON THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIO – ECONOMIC STATUS, FAMILY TYPE ON SCHOOL DROPOUT.**

	School Dropout	Parental Socio economic Status	Family type
Parental Socio economic status Correlation	.031		-.168*
.375**		.017	
Significance	.666		.000

\* $p < 0.05$  (2- tailed)

\*\* $p < 0.001$  (2- tailed)

A two -tailed hypothesis is that there will be a significant influence of parental socio economic status family type, on school dropout in the Winneba Effutu Township. This was statistically tested using the Pearson's correlational method. As shown in table one, the test revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between parental socio economic status and school dropout. ( $r = .031$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , NS).

This result is not significant between parental socio economic status and school dropout.

Though there was an insignificant relationship between parental socio economic status and school



dropout, it can be observed from the table 1 that parental socio-economic status correlated or had a significant relationship with family type ( $r = -.168$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and ( $r = .375$ ,  $p < .01$ ) respectively.

The negative correlation between parental socio-economic status and school dropout suggests that as parental socio economic status improves, there may be less school dropout among pupils. The positive correlation between parental socio-economic status and family type also suggests that as the family relationship improves parental socio-economic status also increases.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULT**

The study hypothesis stated that there will be a significant relationship between parental socio-economic status, family type, and pupil drop out of school.

In a study carried out by Hunter and May, (2003), it was found out that parental socio-economic status was significantly related to pupil's dropout of school. They asserted that poverty and family type are explanations for school disruption, while Garret (2003) observed that low socio economic status, and low income was is the main barrier among parents to sending their children to school, Macionis, Janssen; and Berriet (2005) in their studies found out that formal schooling and especially learning that is not linked to work to be mostly available only to those in the high socio-economic status. Anang (2007) found out from the findings of his study and concluded that school drop out is significantly related to the parental socio-economic status of pupils and family type. He therefore concluded that school drop out is significantly influenced or is related to the socio-economic status of parents and family type. Most researchers see the house hold income and family type as a major determinant of children's education. Table 1 also indicated that though there was no significant relationship between parental socio economic status and school dropout, family type was significantly noted to influence school dropout. The positive correlation between parental socio economic status, and family type suggests that as family relationship improves, parental socio economic status increases and the negative correlation between socio economic status and school dropout suggests that as socio economic status improves the rate of drop out will reduce.

In this study however, the empirical analysis indicated that there was no significant relationship between socio economic status of parent's, family type, and school dropout. Even though the relationship was there it was not a statistically significant relationship according to the results of the analysis. A number of logical inferences can however be put up to support the findings of the hypothesis.

Presently in the study area, opposed to what had been the case some years back, there has been a number of innovations within the school sector. Currently in the Winneba Township, primary school education is free. Besides this, several other awareness in the field of education have been created. Education has been portrayed as the only vehicle to eradicate poverty in families and among individuals and the researcher believes that this has encouraged even the poorest and the worst financially handicapped parents to send their children to school so as to come out, or be liberated from the burden of poverty when the child graduates.

This is so because according to the theory that forms the basis of this study, education is human capital and the decision to invest in education is dependent on whether or not the individual being considered would yield better result to the family.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is hereby concluded that based on the analysis of the data on the hypothesis that stated that there will be a significant relationship between parental socio-economic status, family type and school dropout which showed no significance that there is no significant, relationship between parental socio economic status, family type, school dropout of pupils. It was however observed that there was an insignificant relationship among the variables that dropout among pupils is not totally stamped out or erased in the study area. There are still some in elements of school dropout in among pupils in the study area, despite all the laudable school programmes that have been intended to motivate pupils to complete their school programmes.

## **COUNSELING IMPLICATIONS**

1. Organized group counseling should be provided for the parents to realise the need of sending and making sure that their children are in school possibly by supervision and monitoring.
2. Parents should be encouraged to get involved in the school activities of their children/ wards.
3. It should be made compulsory for parents to belong to, and be part of the school P.T.A (Parents /Teachers' Association)
4. Families should be visited by the school counselors to find out reasons why pupils do not come to school after a long time.
5. Teachers should develop a link between the home and the school, to check pupils' dropout.
6. Parents should be sensitised on the significant of sending their children to school and making sure they complete such school programmes.

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